UNITED
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Security Council

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GENERAL

S/1998/1196
18 December 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued on 17 December 1998 by the Ministry of External Relations of the Sudan concerning the United States and the United Kingdom aggression against Iraq.

I would be grateful if you could have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Elfatih ERWA
Permanent Representative

98-40013 (E) 211298 211298

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Annex

[Original: Arabic]

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

The Republic of the Sudan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Statement on the aggression carried out against Iraq by the United States of America and the United Kingdom

17 December 1998

When the whole international community was demonstrating its sympathy for the Iraqi people and stressing the importance of lifting the tyrannical sanctions imposed on fraternal Iraq, the United States of America and the United Kingdom launched a fresh military attack on Iraq, thereby increasing the suffering of its people, killing the innocent and destroying civilian installations.

This unjustified United States-United Kingdom aggression represents a shameless challenge to the will of the international community and shows complete disregard for international law. It reveals the premeditated purposes of the United States and the United Kingdom and their determination to serve their own political ends at a time when the Security Council was engaged in evaluating Iraq's cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and in estimating the extent to which the latter had fulfilled its mandate. The Secretary-General of the United Nations himself referred only a few days ago to the conflict between Washington's goals and the concerns of the Security Council as set forth in its resolutions on Iraq.

The United States has once again taken the law into its own hands, a behaviour utterly condemned by all those who are committed to international legitimacy and to international norms of civilized humanitarian conduct. That country continually attempts to hijack diplomatic activity that observes the proprieties and protects life, property and peoples' development efforts.

The Sudan declares its solidarity with fraternal Iraq and condemns and rejects the United States-United Kingdom aggression, which violates the sovereignty and integrity of a fraternal Arab State Member of the United Nations, and demands that this aggression be halted forthwith. Diplomatic efforts must be given the opportunity, by means of a complete review of UNSCOM activities, to establish the equitable measures required.

This United States-United Kingdom attack on an Arab Islamic State constitutes a provocation against Arab and Islamic sentiments and a violation of religious sensibilities at a time when the Arab and Islamic nation is preparing for the holy month of Ramadan.

While commending the position taken by those Security Council members who expressed their opposition to the military aggression, the Sudan calls upon the international community, as represented by the United Nations, and all fraternal and friendly States to assume their responsibility to uphold peace, security and stability in the region.

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GENERAL

S/1998/1197
18 December 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL CONCERNING THE CREDENTIALS OF THE REPRESENTATIVE AND THE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a note verbale dated 17 December 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires of the United States Mission to the United Nations stating that Mr. A. Peter Burleigh has been appointed Representative and Mr. Richard Sklar Deputy Representative of the United States of America on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, this communication constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

98-39967 (E) 181298

UNITED
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Security Council

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GENERAL

S/1998/1198
18 December 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 16 December 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs, concerning agreements made, without the prior consent of the Government of Iraq, between the United Nations and certain non-governmental organizations with respect to demining, and the illegal entry into Iraq of personnel from such organizations.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

98-39979 (E) 211298 211298

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Annex

Letter dated 15 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to draw your attention to the references made in the section on Iraq of your report on Assistance in mine clearance (A/53/496), submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session under agenda item 42.

Paragraph 80 states that the United Nations has deployed an international subcontractor in northern Iraq and that demining training and operations had commenced by February 1998. Paragraph 83 states that there are two international non-governmental organizations conducting mine-action activities in northern Iraq, in close liaison with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Paragraph 85 states that Norwegian People's Aid has increased its operations to include the Suleimaniyah governorate, in coordination with UNOPS.

As you are well aware, Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq stress the need to respect the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Iraq. The provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat of the United Nations and the Government of Iraq on the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) include the stipulation that nothing in the Memorandum should be construed as infringing upon the sovereignty or territorial integrity of Iraq.

The Government of Iraq therefore believes that United Nations cooperation with the aforementioned parties, all of which have entered northern Iraq illegally, may be considered a flagrant violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and of the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, and that the only explanation for such cooperation being carried out without its agreement is that it is intended to encourage those parties to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

While rejecting and condemning the illegal entry of the aforementioned parties into northern Iraq, the Government of Iraq absolutely refuses to accept that the United Nations should continue to cooperate with those parties on Iraqi territory. It requests you to recommend to the Office of the Iraq Programme that the Office take steps to halt this unacceptable cooperation forthwith and that it replace those parties with United Nations personnel and demining experts whose entry into the region with a view to carrying out demining operations in the three northern provinces, as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, has been agreed to by the Government of Iraq.

In raising with you this matter which, for the reasons that we have outlined above, is of great concern to us, I urge you to appreciate the position of Iraq and to respond to our request to end cooperation with the parties referred to above and ask them to leave Iraq as soon as possible, in order to maintain the spirit of cooperation that exists between the Government of Iraq

and the United Nations with respect to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq

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GENERAL

S/1998/1199
18 December 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, regarding the bombing on 17 December 1998 by the forces of aggression of the United States of America and the United Kingdom of a warehouse containing stored rice in the city of Tikrit.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 17 December 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

On 17 December 1998 at 1.05 a.m. the forces of aggression of the United States of America and the United Kingdom fired a Tomahawk missile at a warehouse containing 2,600 tons of rice imported with the profits from sales of Iraqi oil, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding. The warehouse, which was located in Tikrit, and its contents were completely destroyed. At midday the competent Iraqi authorities brought members of the press and news agencies present in Iraq to visit the site.

We wish to inform you that we have requested the Coordinator of the United Nations Humanitarian Programme in Baghdad to inspect the site to determine how much of the imported rice was destroyed with a view to replacing it.

We also wish to denounce again the attack by the United States of America and the United Kingdom against Iraq. In the eyes of international law this attack is a crime against humanity for which the United States of America and the United Kingdom bear full responsibility. The destruction of the aforementioned warehouse is in itself an attack on the civil and humanitarian rights of the Iraqi people and proof of the untruthful nature of the claims made in American and British circles that those countries are seeking to safeguard the rights set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq

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Security Council

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GENERAL

S/1998/1200
18 December 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict (see annex), which was issued on 16 December 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA
Permanent Representative

Annex

DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ON THE ETHIOPIAN-ERITREAN CONFLICT

The European Union (EU) reiterates its strong support for the mediation efforts of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in regard to the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict that have led to proposals for a framework agreement.

The EU once again expresses its hope that both sides will be able to respond positively to the proposals and that a framework agreement can be concluded at the meeting of the OAU Central Organ on 17 and 18 December 1998.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this Declaration.

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S/1998/1201
18 December 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KAZAKHSTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued on 17 December 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan in connection with the missile and bombing strikes against Iraq.

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Akmaral Kh. ARYSTANBEKOVA
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the
United Nations

98-40007 (E) 211298 211298

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Annex

Statement issued on 17 December 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

News of the missile and bombing strikes against Iraq by the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was received in Kazakhstan with deep regret and concern. The use of military force against Iraq without taking into account the views of an overwhelming majority of the world community has given rise to a new spiral in the escalation of tension in the Middle East region and has exacerbated the international situation as a whole.

At the same time, Kazakhstan's position is based on the need for complete compliance by Iraq with its obligations under Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding of 23 February 1998 between Iraq and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Kazakhstan advocates the convening of a special meeting of the Security Council in order to seek ways to resolve the situation that has arisen.

UNITED
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Security Council

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GENERAL

S/1998/1202
21 December 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH AND FRENCH

Draft resolution

The Security Council,

Reaffirming the statements of its President of 6 November 1998 (S/PRST/1998/31) and 30 November 1998 (S/PRST/1998/35),

Gravely concerned by the crisis facing Guinea-Bissau and the serious humanitarian situation affecting the civilian population in Guinea-Bissau,

Expressing its firm commitment to preserve the unity, sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Guinea-Bissau,

1. Welcomes the agreements between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta signed in Praia on 26 August 1998 (S/1998/825), and in Abuja on 1 November 1998 (S/1998/1028, annex) and the Additional Protocol signed in Lomé on 15 December 1998 (S/1998/1178, annex);

2. Calls upon the Government and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta to implement fully all the provisions of the agreements, including with regard to respect for the ceasefire, the urgent establishment of a government of national unity, the holding of general and presidential elections no later than the end of March 1999, and the immediate opening of the airport and seaport in Bissau, and, in cooperation with all concerned, the withdrawal of all foreign troops in Guinea-Bissau and the simultaneous deployment of the interposition force of the Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);

3. Commends the Member States of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and ECOWAS on the key role they are playing to restore peace and security throughout Guinea-Bissau, and on their intention to participate with others in the observation of the forthcoming general and presidential elections and welcomes the role of ECOMOG in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, aimed at guaranteeing security along the Guinea-Bissau/Senegal border, keeping apart the parties in conflict and guaranteeing free access to humanitarian organizations and agencies to reach the affected civilian populations, to be carried out in accordance, inter alia, with paragraph 6 below;

4. Approves the implementation by the ECOMOG interposition force of its mandate referred to in paragraph 3 above in a neutral and impartial way and in conformity with United Nations peacekeeping standards to achieve its objective to facilitate the return to peace and security by monitoring the implementation of the Abuja Agreement;

5. Calls upon all concerned, including the Government and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta, to respect strictly relevant provisions of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and to ensure safe and unimpeded access by international humanitarian organizations to persons in need of assistance as a result of the conflict;

6. Affirms that the ECOMOG interposition force may be required to take action to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel in the discharge of its mandate;

7. Requests ECOMOG to provide periodic reports at least every month through the Secretary-General, the first report to be made one month after deployment of its troops;

8. Requests also the Secretary-General to make recommendations to the Council on a possible role of the United Nations in the process of peace and reconciliation in Guinea-Bissau, including the early establishment of arrangements for liaison between the United Nations and ECOMOG;

9. Reiterates its appeal to States and organizations concerned to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and refugees;

10. Reiterates also its call on States to provide voluntarily financial, technical and logistical support to assist ECOMOG to carry out its peacekeeping role in Guinea-Bissau;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to establish a Trust Fund for Guinea-Bissau which would assist in supporting the ECOMOG interposition force in providing logistical support to them and encourages Member States to contribute to the Fund;

12. Requests further the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council regularly informed of the situation in Guinea-Bissau and to submit a report to it by 17 March 1999 on the implementation of the Abuja Agreement including the implementation by the ECOMOG interposition force of its mandate;

13. Decides to review the situation, including the implementation of the present resolution, before the end of March 1999, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 12 above;

14. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

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Security Council

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GENERAL

S/1998/1203
18 December 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

THIRD REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1201 (1998) of 15 October 1998, by which the Security Council requested me to submit by 20 December the report called for in paragraph 9 of its resolution 1182 (1998) of 14 July 1998. The present report covers developments since my last report on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), dated 21 August 1998 (S/1998/783 and Add.1).

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS

2. My Special Representative, Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, continued to provide good offices to the Government and political parties and assist them in the promotion of the reforms necessary to achieve national reconciliation, security and stability in the country. In spite of the persistent divisions between the Government and various opposition forces, the overall political situation remained generally calm. The presence of MINURCA has also had a beneficial effect on the security situation, providing to the Central African people an opportunity to overcome the deep crisis which had engulfed the country.

3. As indicated in my report of 19 June 1998 (S/1998/540), the adoption of the National Reconciliation Pact on 4 March 1998 gave a significant impetus to the process of national reconciliation which began with the adoption of the Bangui Agreements in January 1997 (S/1997/561). Another important provision of the Agreements was implemented with the adoption, on 30 April 1998, of the Press Code by the National Assembly and the establishment by a presidential decree dated 27 May 1998 of a commission to oversee the freedom of the press (Haut Conseil de la communication). On 7 November, President Ange-Félix Patassé signed the decree appointing the members of the Commission.

4. While most of the public attention and energies of the last few months were focused on preparations for the legislative elections, progress in the implementation of the short-term measures envisaged in the Bangui Agreements has been slowed down. Those measures include: the reduction of personnel in the President's office; granting to ministers from the opposition parties in the

Government of National Unity the right to appoint their advisers freely; the reactivation of the follow-up commission on the recommendations of the general meeting on youth and the creation of a national economic and social council; and procedures for appointing university teachers.

5. Following its periodic evaluation session held on 25 September 1998, the Monitoring and Arbitration Committee established pursuant to the Bangui Agreements urged President Patassé and the ministers concerned to take early action for implementing those remaining measures as soon as possible. The President agreed with the need to ensure their earliest implementation, in particular the creation of a national economic and social council. He questioned, however, the need to reduce the staff of his office and insisted on his right to approve the nomination of the key personnel in the ministries. The possible reconstitution of the Government as a result of the legislative elections held in November and December will provide an opportunity to revert to these issues. My Special Representative intends to play an active role in resolving them.

6. In a statement made at the twentieth Africa-France Summit held in Paris on 27 and 28 November 1998, President Patassé expressed gratitude to the Security Council for establishing MINURCA. He stressed that, although the situation in the country had stabilized, peace was still fragile and would require the continuation of the United Nations Mission until the presidential elections in 1999. On his return to Bangui, the President expressed great satisfaction with the positive reaction of the Conference to his request for support in maintaining a major international presence in the country. He praised the role played in this regard by President Chirac and expressed satisfaction that France and his country were experiencing closer relations.

7. As part of broad consultations with regional leaders who had contributed to the resolution of the crisis in the Central African Republic, my Special Representative met with the Presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon and Togo during the period from July to October 1998. Mr. Adeniji informed them on the situation in the Central African Republic and solicited their continued support for the peace process in the country. He also met with the Head of State of Nigeria, to explore its possible assistance, in particular in the restructuring of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA). In early November, my Special Representative also had wide-ranging discussions on the Central African Republic with the French authorities.

Legislative elections

8. It will be recalled that, following the decision of the Mixed and Independent Electoral Commission (CEMI) to set the dates of the first and second rounds of the legislative elections for 22 November and 13 December 1998, the Security Council decided, in its resolution 1201 (1998), that MINURCA should support the election process. In particular, MINURCA would transport electoral materials and equipment to and from selected sites, ensure their security and that of the international electoral observers, and conduct a limited but reliable international observation of the two rounds.

9. Pursuant to that resolution, MINURCA proceeded immediately with the deployment of troops from Bangui to five of the six provincial sites originally selected (Bouar, Bambari, Bangassou, Berberati and Kaga Bandoro). The sixth site could not be made available by the Government, but this did not disrupt the electoral programme. A total of 277 troops, drawn from the existing MINURCA contingents from Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and Senegal, together with 70 additional troops provided by France for logistic and medical support and 16 additional communications troops contributed by Canada, were deployed to those sites, to ensure the security of the electoral materials and observers. At the same time, the Mission deployed to these sites and in Bangui 14 medium-term election observers. Eighty short-term United Nations observers were also deployed one week before the first round of elections, as planned.

10. On 12 November 1998, 150 carefully selected FACA troops were also deployed in Bangui and to the five sites and placed under the operational control of MINURCA. These FACA elements are intended to constitute the nucleus of a future republican, multi-ethnic Central African army. Their deployment and maintenance were funded through voluntary contributions provided by France and Germany.

11. The electoral campaign officially commenced on 7 November 1998 with a speech of President Patassé in which he paid tribute to the donor community and the United Nations for their assistance in the election process. At the same time, the President announced the lifting of the night curfew imposed since the third mutiny of November 1996. The electoral campaign was conducted without major incident. However, mistrust and suspicion among the various political forces provoked sensitive reactions to certain political statements. It is to the credit of all concerned, including the Government and the opposition, that they constantly resorted to the good offices of MINURCA and my Special Representative, thus averting or settling many disputes.

12. Tribute should also be paid to the essential role played by donors in the preparation of the elections. Under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with the technical assistance of MINURCA, representatives of the group of donors, which included the European Union, France, Japan and the United States, held regular working sessions with CEMI to discuss the details of the electoral process. The role of the donors intensified as the date of the elections drew nearer and it became obvious that CEMI needed additional assistance. It should be noted that all the donors responded generously to ensure the success of the elections.

13. The first round of the legislative elections was held on 22 November in a peaceful and orderly manner. A total of 848 candidates, including members of 29 political parties and 107 independent candidates, ran for the 109 seats in the National Assembly. About 100 international observers from the United Nations, the European Union and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie visited some 800 polling stations (31 per cent of the total), thus being able to make a reliable assessment of the polling process. Voter participation was high; and political parties and candidates deployed an impressive number of observers at polling stations. On balance, electoral officials carried out their duties well, notwithstanding the scarcity of some of the necessary supplies and insufficient training. No significant incidents or cases of intimidation were reported. However, some organizational shortcomings

were obvious, in particular the poorly prepared electoral lists, the difficulties in the distribution of voter cards and the late and inefficient delivery of some electoral materials, which delayed the opening of some polling stations by several hours.

14. Despite these technical problems and minor irregularities, which were essentially due to CEMI inexperience, the United Nations and other international observers unanimously considered that the first round of the elections was conducted in a satisfactory and credible manner. They were impressed by the patience of the voters and by their large turnout.

15. On 7 December 1998, the Constitutional Court announced the official results of the first round of the elections, according to which 46 candidates were elected, including 26 representatives from President Patassé's party, 17 from the opposition and three independent candidates. The 195 candidates who received more than 10 per cent of the vote in the first round were eligible to participate in the second round.

16. A few days after the first round, the Electoral Commission, donors and MINURCA resumed their regular meetings to prepare for the second round and, in particular, to assist the Commission in correcting as much as possible the organizational shortcomings described above. The second round took place on 13 December 1998, as planned. Its results are expected to be released by the Constitutional Court on 28 December 1998.

17. It appears that if the pattern of results of the first round is maintained, each of the main political parties will have drawn overwhelming support for the ethnic and regional base of their leaders. Such a polarization of the political forces could have far-reaching consequences not only for the formation of the new Government, but also for the commitment of some of the political parties to the implementation of the Bangui Agreements. Thus, the continuous involvement of the international community in the Central African Republic, both in the political and security areas, remains crucial.

Human rights

18. As part of MINURCA's mandate, particular emphasis was placed on public awareness of and respect for basic human rights. A special programme in this area was elaborated by the Mission's human rights unit, which worked in cooperation with the Ministry for Human Rights and the Promotion of the Culture of Democracy. MINURCA also provided technical assistance to the Ministry and to its National Committee, established in July 1998, to prepare and follow up the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition to assisting the Committee in planning and carrying out the national commemorative activities which took place from 3 to 10 December 1998, MINURCA helped to elaborate a national plan of action for human rights education, in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. On 29 July, in collaboration with human rights non-governmental organizations, MINURCA launched an awareness campaign on Radio MINURCA to ensure widespread dissemination of human rights principles and aimed at strengthening national capacity in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Public information

19. The dissemination of accurate information as a tool for national reconciliation and peace, particularly during the electoral period, was an integral part of MINURCA's mandate. To this end, weekly press conferences were given by my Special Representative, the Force Commander and other senior United Nations officials. Daily programmes were broadcast on radio MINURCA, which operated in frequency modulation and short-wave frequency, and numerous documents, including a newsletter in French and Sango, were disseminated, concerning MINURCA's mandate and activities, as well as various issues related to the elections and other questions of national interest. Assistance was provided to the Central African United Nations Association in the regular conduct of lectures on topical issues, particularly those related to peaceful resolution of conflicts and sustainable development. All these activities helped to enhance public knowledge of the Bangui process and encouraged cooperation in fulfilling it.

20. Broadcasting 24 hours a day, Radio MINURCA quickly established itself as a source of objective reporting. On 7 November, just in time for the legislative elections, Radio MINURCA extended its coverage throughout the country, thanks to an additional donation from the Government of Denmark. Radio MINURCA regularly broadcast live programmes, not only with senior United Nations officials, but also with members of the Electoral Commission, thus providing a major information flow between CEMI and its structures in the provinces. Radio news bulletins were broadcast seven times a day in French and Sango. To prepare radio programmes, cooperation agreements were signed with Radio France Internationale, the British Broadcasting Corporation and Panos Institute. The role of Radio MINURCA in the legislative elections was widely recognized by the Central African population. As the only local radio station with country-wide coverage, it became a symbol of the United Nations commitment to assist the Central African people in restoring normalcy and peace.

III. MILITARY AND SECURITY ASPECTS

Activities of the United Nations troops

21. MINURCA continued to assist in maintaining a secure and stable environment in Bangui. Through the conduct of regular patrols and maintenance of checkpoints operated 24 hours a day, including joint patrols with FACA elements, MINURCA has contributed to the improvement of law and order and helped decrease the level of criminality in the capital. Special operations were conducted, with a view to containing and reducing banditry in the troublesome areas of Bangui and its vicinity. MINURCA troops also provided emergency medical and humanitarian assistance to the local population.

22. During the election campaign, enhanced security arrangements were instituted, including increased patrols throughout Bangui. The MINURCA rapid intervention unit based at Camp Béal was put on full alert and was ready to support regular mobile patrols. Sensitive areas of the city were frequently patrolled by armoured vehicles, while random checks were carried out in the main arteries leading to the voting centres. MINURCA troops had often to intervene

in a preventive way, particularly in those areas of Bangui where the national army is still viewed with suspicion.

23. MINURCA's logistic support was absolutely essential for the success of the legislative elections, as it assisted in bringing the electoral materials to the provinces. Its authorized strength, although minimal for similar circumstances, made it a credible deterrent security force in dealing with any breach of peace in the city.

Restructuring of FACA

24. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1182 (1998) of 14 July 1998, my Special Representative convinced President Patassé to set up, in September 1998, a joint Government/MINURCA committee on the restructuring of the Central African armed forces. The Committee completed preparation of a draft law on national defence. The draft defines the concept of national defence, which integrates the defence of the country's territorial integrity and its internal security. It defines the Central African defence forces as comprising FACA and the gendarmerie, and also spells out the role of the President, the Prime Minister, various defence bodies and key ministries.

25. The Joint Committee also prepared four draft decrees on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of National Defence, on its territorial organization, on the establishment of a defence mechanism relating to military intelligence, and on crisis management. The Committee is finalizing a draft decree concerning the organization and functioning of the military staff of the Armed Forces, as well as a draft timetable according to which key elements in the restructuring process could be accomplished in the short, medium and long terms. These elements include: enactment of legal instruments, including laws, decrees and appointments of senior officers; rejuvenation of the military personnel through reform, retirement and demobilization; improvement of working conditions, including payment of salary and salary arrears; provision of equipment and support materials; training of personnel; deployment of units; and infrastructures, including equipment and army barracks.

26. The draft law is awaiting the convening of the new National Assembly in January 1999, after which other instruments will be adopted. In the meantime, the process leading to rejuvenation has commenced with the demobilization and reintegration programme, described below. Training has also started, with the participation of 150 FACA troops in MINURCA support to the election process.

Demobilization and reintegration

27. Under the demobilization and reintegration programme funded by UNDP and the United Nations Office of Project Services (OPS), the registration of all FACA personnel, as well as the gendarmerie and the Special Force for the Defence of Republican Institutions, was started on 14 October 1998. In accordance with its mandate, MINURCA provided two observers to each of the eight registration units. To date, a total of 88 per cent (over 4,000) of all security forces have been registered in Bangui and the western and central parts of the country. The operation, temporarily suspended during the first round of the legislative elections, was resumed on 23 November, in the southeastern region. This is the

first time that a registration process has taken place in the country, with a view to establishing an accurate data bank on national defence personnel. On completion of this first stage, the project for implementing formal demobilization will be elaborated on the basis of the compiled data.

Disarmament

28. Under resolution 1159 (1998) of 27 March 1998, the role of MINURCA in the disarmament process was limited to safekeeping the weapons and ammunition already collected by the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) and to monitoring their final disposition. However, soon after its establishment, MINURCA found that the disarmament process was far from being completed. The Mission had therefore to continue with the programme of disarmament, with the financial support of UNDP.

29. The fragility of peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic partly lies in the deep mutual mistrust of various political forces, which has contributed to their fears that each is acquiring weapons for a possible showdown. Though many of these fears are exaggerated, the uncontrolled and wide circulation of arms in the Central African subregion calls for the particular attention of the international community. In the circumstances, MINURCA continued to investigate reported cases of arms caches. It should be noted that a substantial number of arms were recovered in the period preceding the holding of the legislative elections. This successful recovery of weapons is attributable both to the well-organized MINURCA operations and to the willingness of political parties to warn MINURCA about the possession of weapons by the population and the illegal transfer of arms from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The disarmament programme will need to be actively continued after the legislative elections, and I would recommend that most of the collected weapons and ammunition be ultimately destroyed under the supervision of the United Nations.

Civilian police

30. Security Council resolution 1159 (1998) mandated MINURCA to assist the Government in a short-term police trainers programme and other capacity-building efforts to enhance the national police, and to advise the authorities on the restructuring of the national police and special police forces. There had been no new recruitment and retraining of the police and gendarmerie for the past 20 years, which resulted in the inadequate performance of the security forces and the total dilapidation of the National Police College and the Gendarmerie Training School. Under the circumstances, the civilian police component of MINURCA elaborated a plan of action, including a short-term train-the-trainers programme, aimed at providing professional and general skills to some 1,000 police and gendarmerie personnel, and thus creating the nucleus of an adequately trained security force. The training includes professional, judicial, civil, technical and physical aspects, as well as instructions on human rights and law enforcement. MINURCA also mobilized financial assistance, mainly from UNDP, the World Food Programme, Germany and Sweden, for the rehabilitation of the training centres and the upkeep of trainees. To date, 120 gendarmes and 143 police officers have completed their training. It is estimated that 250 additional security officers can be trained within the next three months. The continuation

of this important programme will need the involvement of the international community, including by the provision of the necessary resources.

IV. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

31. As was indicated in my report of 19 June 1998 (S/1998/540), the economy of the Central African Republic was severely damaged during the mutinies of 1996. The security initially provided by MISAB and, since 15 April 1998, by MINURCA, created conditions for the resumption of some business activities. It also allowed the Government to undertake some reform measures which produced increased revenue collection. With the modest progress registered in the area, the Government succeeded at last in concluding an Agreement for Enhanced Structural Adjustment Support (ESAF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 22 July 1998. In June 1998, the World Bank sponsored a donors' meeting which expressed general support to the financial consolidation and economic reform programme in the Central African Republic and helped identify potential sources of additional support. A Paris Club meeting in September granted generous debt relief to the Government, and the World Bank extended a technical assistance grant aimed at preparing possible post-conflict reconstruction activities in the social sector.

32. Despite considerable efforts made by reform-minded officials, the Central African Government was not able to meet the September benchmarks of the financial consolidation and economic reform programmes agreed with the Bretton Woods institutions. Under these circumstances, IMF was unable to complete the first ESAF review; and the World Bank could not appraise a proposed quick-disbursing operation. Revenue collection, which rose to 3.8 billion CFA francs shortly before the ESAF Agreement, has again declined. Though the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is obviously having an adverse effect on the import and export activities of the Central African Republic, the slow implementation of institutional reforms has also been an important reason for the decline in revenues. In addition, the vital issue of privatization of some public enterprises, in particular PETROCA petroleum company, has not been resolved as planned. Regrettably, the Government once again failed to meet its obligations, in particular the regular payment of salaries to its employees. As a result, the IMF mission that visited the country in October 1998 could not recommend the release of the second allocation of CFAF 6 billion under the ESAF Agreement.

33. The Central African Government should intensify efforts to put back on track the programme agreed with IMF and the World Bank, and accelerate its implementation. However, the prospects for economic and social recovery hinge, to a large extent, on the future security situation in the country. As indicated in this regard by the visiting IMF delegation, the uncertainties that surround the future of MINURCA have not helped. Without progress in the restructuring of FACA, the security vacuum that could be created by the absence of a credible international presence in the country is likely to jeopardize the modest socio-economic progress achieved so far.

34. My Special Representative continues to impress upon the Central African authorities the need to accelerate the implementation of recommended reform

measures. In accordance with his mandate under resolution 1159 (1998), he established a programme of close consultations with various international partners of the Central African Republic, including the financial institutions and United Nations agencies and programmes, in support of the peace process and of national reconstruction and development. Since the deployment of MINURCA, these international organizations have been able to resume many programmes that had been suspended because of the security situation in the country.

35. At the monthly consultative meetings initiated by my Special Representative, the organizations involved coordinate their activities and work out modalities for mutual support. At the December meeting, the representatives of various agencies and programmes operating in the country expressed the unanimous view that it would be premature to withdraw the United Nations peacekeeping force as envisaged in Security Council resolution 1201 (1998). They were concerned that, in such a case, their programmes would be likely to suffer major setbacks, since the Central African forces were not yet in a position to ensure a proper security environment in the country, particularly at this time of great turbulence in the neighbouring countries.

36. As the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo escalated, the group of Rwandans camped in the Central African Republic began demanding to be returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, their first country of asylum. When the Rwandans threatened the Government with possible disturbances, the Central African Government, anxious to avoid endangering the legislative elections, transferred 776 Rwandans to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 11 November. In early November, Sudanese refugees stationed in camps in the eastern part of the Central African Republic were attacked by an armed group. At the request of the Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), MINURCA provided logistic assistance for the deployment of some FACA troops to ensure security in the camps and for the evacuation of UNHCR workers. In early December, an influx of refugees was reported in the Bangassou area, as fighting intensified across the border in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These developments also are a cause for growing concern.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

37. In his letter of 8 January 1998 addressed to me (S/1998/61, annex), President Patassé committed himself to the implementation of the Bangui Agreements and undertook to carry out major political and economic reforms. Bearing in mind these important commitments, as well as the need to support the national reconciliation process in the Central African Republic and enhance stability in the subregion, I recommended to the Security Council the establishment of a new peacekeeping operation, so that the peace process in the country could continue to move forward in a reasonably safe and secure environment.

38. I am gratified that the decision taken by the Security Council on 27 March 1998 proved to be timely and well-founded. The establishment of MINURCA to succeed MISAB was crucial for the maintenance of stability not only in Bangui, but also in the country, and allowed the successful holding of

legislative elections under effective international monitoring. As a result of the involvement of the United Nations, the Central African Republic has become an island of relative stability in an otherwise war-torn region.

39. Since the deployment of the Mission in April and May 1998, progress has also been made towards implementing important elements of the Bangui Agreements, creating a system of better governance, consolidating national reconciliation and undertaking indispensable economic and social reforms. MINURCA and my Special Representative have been instrumental in assisting the Government and the people of the Central African Republic in this process, and have been working patiently and persistently with all the parties involved, in particular with the Government of President Patassé. The constructive involvement of the United Nations, coupled with a credible military presence, has helped to keep the country on the right track.

40. The holding of the legislative elections on 22 November and 13 December 1998 was an important step forward towards the restoration of national institutions almost completely destroyed by successive mutinies which shook the country in 1996. I congratulate the people of the Central African Republic for their outstanding achievement. Tribute should be paid to the commitment of the group of donors and the dedication of the personnel of MINURCA, whose combined efforts with the Electoral Commission made the elections possible.

41. However, the results of the first round of the legislative elections suggest that strong divisions continue to exist in the country along ethnic and regional lines. If the second round confirms this trend, the post-electoral period will require close monitoring. The new legislative assembly will need to act as a true national institution, in the interest of the country and not according to ethnic or regional interests. The international community should assist in this regard, through mediation and confidence-building.

42. In his statement at the Africa-France Summit held in Paris on 27 and 28 November 1998, President Patassé made a very strong appeal to the international community to maintain its assistance to the country during the period leading to the next important stage of national institution-rebuilding, the presidential elections scheduled for the second half of 1999. This appeal was again reaffirmed by the President in a letter to me, dated 8 December 1998. Equally strong appeals for an extension of international assistance were made to my Special Representative by the leaders of almost all opposition parties and representatives of civil society.

43. Whatever further international assistance will be provided to the Central African Republic must be predicated upon the country's capacity to maintain its own security and stability. This in turn will depend on the creation of a professional and well-trained multi-ethnic national security and defence force. The utmost priority should therefore be given to the restructuring of the existing forces. The Joint Government/MINURCA Committee, established to that effect on the advice of my Special Representative, made significant progress in elaborating the bills on national defence and the structure of the defence forces. It also prepared the outline of a comprehensive programme of restructuring, which, once enacted, will require substantial international

assistance for its implementation. I hope that when it convenes in early 1999, the newly elected National Assembly will expeditiously adopt the draft bills into law and that the necessary implementation decrees will be signed by President Patassé. He has assured my Special Representative of his total commitment to the process. On the basis of the above-mentioned programme, my Special Representative intends to present to the Government a well-defined timeline and benchmarks that would serve to create a strong basis for the restructured armed forces by September/October 1999.

44. MINURCA could play an important role in ensuring the implementation of such a programme in the shortest possible time and in coordinating international efforts. To that effect, provision could be made for creating a United Nations training assistance team, composed of 35 military personnel in addition to the existing 25 United Nations civilian police advisers. The team's task would be to assist in the restructuring and train-the-trainers process, supervising it and evaluating periodically the implementation of the programme, especially during its initial phase.

45. Obviously, further international efforts will also be required for rebuilding the national police and the gendarmerie. The progress already made by MINURCA in their retraining represents only a modest beginning in repairing the two decades of professional and infrastructural neglect.

46. The experience of MINURCA in the preparations of the legislative elections confirms that the involvement of the international community was crucial for the conduct of this important national endeavour. However, the stakes for the 1999 presidential election will be even higher for the future of the country.

47. The continuation of the United Nations involvement could not only lend much needed credibility to the process, but could also enhance the capacity of the Central African people to undertake future elections in a transparent manner. To build this capacity and institutional memory, international electoral assistance could be essential, as an integral part of any peace-building in the Central African Republic. This should involve: the preservation of CEMI records; a total review of the electoral register; advice on the preparation and distribution of voter cards; the necessary revision of the Electoral Code; timely planning of electoral activities, including early sensitization of donors; training for electoral duties; and assistance in developing the capacities of local non-governmental organizations in electoral observation.

48. The adoption of fundamental reforms in the economy, with a view to halting the deterioration of the living and social standards of the population, represents an important prerequisite for national reconstruction. These central elements of the Bangui Agreements should be pursued with the utmost vigour. The coordinating role of my Special Representative and the positive impact of the MINURCA presence facilitated the reactivation of several multilateral projects. For these efforts to be sustained, an enabling security environment will be required to prevent a new economic and social catastrophe.

49. In considering the continuation of international assistance for the Central African Republic, I invite the Security Council to consider the complexity of the fundamental issues of reforms, elections and security, which are clearly

linked. By all accounts, there is still a need for the presence of a credible neutral military force that would maintain stability in Bangui, and enable the international community to assist with the training and restructuring of the national armed forces.

50. As was indicated in my report of 23 February 1998 (S/1998/148), the task of maintaining a secure environment in Bangui and its immediate vicinity requires an international military force with sufficient capability to carry out the Mission's mandate and to provide adequate protection to United Nations personnel and property, should the situation deteriorate. The basic operational assumptions developed earlier this year remain valid. A force level of approximately 1,300 would permit the continuous patrolling of six mechanized infantry companies, each 120 to 150 personnel strong, throughout Bangui. The rest of the force would be tasked, as is the case now, to provide security, communications and logistical as well as medical support to the Mission. Therefore, 720 infantry troops ensuring a permanent and visible presence in a city of up to 600,000 people is, by any standard, an absolute minimum. In addition, only such an international force would give my Special Representative the necessary leverage to continue to play the good offices and mediation role that has proven to be so indispensable in a period of uncertainty in the political and security fields.

51. Bearing the above considerations in mind and the strong appeals of the Government and various political parties of the Central African Republic, I invite the Security Council to consider extending the mandate of MINURCA with the existing structure and overall strength, including its political, military and civilian police components. The additional military personnel suggested in paragraph 44 above could be accommodated within the current authorized strength by adjusting the military structure of the Mission. The tasks of the Mission would remain as mandated under Security Council resolutions 1159 (1998) of 27 March 1998, 1182 (1998) of 14 July 1998 and 1201 (1998) of 15 October 1998, with the following modifications.

52. MINURCA would, in cooperation with other United Nations entities concerned, closely monitor the developments in the National Assembly and assist it in steering the country towards national reconciliation, good governance, stability and economic reform; provide advice and limited training for the restructuring of the security forces, in particular FACA, which should be based on multi-ethnic and republican principles; and offer technical assistance and observation for the presidential elections.

53. The exit strategy for the operation would be firmly linked with the conduct of presidential elections, which are scheduled to be held by the fall of 1999. The Mission would be terminated no later than 60 days after the announcement of the election results. Cost estimates for such an extension will be issued shortly as an addendum to the present report.

54. In accordance with resolution 1201 (1998), a tentative timetable for the drawdown of MINURCA and its liquidation has been prepared, which calls for phasing out six MINURCA contingents in a period four weeks from 15 January 1998, the date stipulated in the resolution. At the same time, it is envisaged that the units responsible for providing security as well as logistical, medical and

communications support, would be repatriated during the last days of the Mission. However, in view of my recommendation to extend the Mission, I intend to postpone the beginning of any drawdown until the Security Council has taken a decision on the matter.

55. It is clear that any United Nations presence in the Central African Republic should depend on scrupulous and timely implementation by the Government of the crucial reforms that need to be carried out in the economic and security areas. Should the Council indicate its willingness to prolong the Mission, it would be my intention to dispatch to Bangui a Personal Envoy, to impress upon President Patassé the need to implement all his undertakings in full, with a binding and irrevocable implementation schedule. I also intend to discuss with the President the possibility of a progressive reduction of the MINURCA military component, commensurate with the advances in the training and restructuring of FACA.

56. Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of my Special Representative, Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, the Force Commander, Brigadier General Barthélémy Ratanga, and all staff of MINURCA, as well as the staff of various United Nations agencies and programmes operating in the Central African Republic, for their contribution to the promotion of peace and national reconciliation in the country.

Annex

United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic: Contribution as at 17 December 1998

	Staff officers	Troops[a]	Support units	Civilian police observers	Total
Benin	-	-	-	2	2
Burkina Faso	6	119	-	-	125
Canada	4	25	-	-	29[b]
Chad	6	118	-	-	124
Côte d'Ivoire	8	210	15	-	233
Egypt	5	120	-	-	125
France	2	-	200	7	209[b]
Gabon	8	120	-	-	128[c]
Mali	5	119	-	6	130
Portugal	-	-	-	2	2
Senegal	9	118	-	-	127
Togo	6	120	-	-	126
Tunisia	-	-	-	2	2
Total	59	1 069	215	19	1 362

[a] 150 FACA troops complemented MINURCA during the electoral process.

[b] The figures do not include national support elements (34 for Canada and 91 for France).

[c] In addition to the Force Commander.

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LETTER DATED 18 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to information originally brought to my attention by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations concerning British Broadcasting Corporation news reports televised earlier this year in which two armoured personnel carriers (APCs), allegedly belonging to the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, were shown destroying civilian houses in Kosovo during the first week of March 1998. I was also informed that the two APCs shown might have been stolen in July 1995 from the Dutch battalion serving with the United Nations Protection Force.

On the basis of the information provided, the Secretariat has taken the action outlined in the annex to the present letter. Taking into account the fact that it has proved impossible to resolve this issue in a satisfactory manner, and in accordance with the wish expressed by the authorities of the Netherlands, I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

Annex

Alleged use of stolen Dutch armoured personnel carriers in Kosovo

On 6 March 1998, the nine o'clock news programme of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) televised video footage in which two armoured personnel carriers (APCs), allegedly being used by the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, were shown destroying civilian houses in Kosovo. The footage was also broadcast on other international television programmes, including the BBC television programme "Special Correspondent" on 31 May 1998. A copy of the video recording is available for viewing in the Secretariat.

Following the airing of the video footage by the BBC, Dutch military experts identified the APCs as being part of the YPR-765-type vehicles belonging to the Dutch battalion serving with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were stolen by the Bosnian Serb Army in Srebrenica in July 1995. This information was conveyed to the United Nations Secretariat, in early June 1998, by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations.

In view of the seriousness of the charge, the United Nations Secretariat immediately requested the United Nations Liaison Office in Belgrade to seek clarification from the Yugoslav authorities on the alleged use of the stolen Dutch APCs in Kosovo. The United Nations Secretariat also followed up the matter with the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations. The Government of the Netherlands, on its part, also pursued the issue bilaterally with the Yugoslav authorities.

Following intervention by the United Nations, the Secretary of the Yugoslav Federal Committee for Cooperation with United Nations Peace Missions and the Multinational Force, Mr. Mile Pešut, in a letter dated 26 June 1998 addressed to the Head of the United Nations Liaison Office in Belgrade, denied that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had the stolen Dutch APCs in its possession. The letter read in part as follows:

> "The armoured personnel carrier make YPR-765 does not belong to the armaments and equipment of the Army of Yugoslavia and any linkage between it and our Army is tendentious and malicious. Likewise, this vehicle does not exist in the Police Force of the Republic of Serbia either, so that it cannot be spotted in the anti-terrorist campaign mounted by that Police in Kosovo and Metohija."

In the light of this reply, the United Nations Secretariat, on 16 July 1998, requested the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations to provide additional information on the exact time and place that the APCs had allegedly been seen, as well as on the source of this information, so that the United Nations could follow up further on the issue with the Yugoslav authorities.

In a letter dated 7 August 1998, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations provided the United Nations with a copy of the original videotape and uncut recordings made by the BBC television crew in the first week of March 1998. The Chargé d'affaires, in his letter, stated that the camera footing constituted clear proof that the armoured personnel carriers had been used in the wilful destruction of civilian housing in Kosovo. He noted further that the resemblance between the missing Dutch APCs from Srebrenica and the APCs used in Kosovo was striking, and that the Dutch military experts had no doubt that the APCs filmed in Kosovo were of the YPR-765 type. He further stated as follows:

> "Since no other country has deployed APCs of the type YPR-765 in the former area of operations of UNPROFOR, the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] has never bought any YPR-765 and has denied to own these APCs, this leads to the inevitable conclusion that the television recordings prove that the FRY used Dutch YPRs-765 in Kosovo."

The Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations also provided the Secretariat with a copy of a declaration of authenticity, dated 4 September 1998, in which the executive editor of the BBC news bulletins solemnly declared that the journalists responsible for the footage of the two armoured personnel carriers had confirmed that the pictures had been filmed near the village of Prekazi in Kosovo, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in the early evening of 5 March 1998.

Upon receipt of the additional information presented by the Dutch authorities and the copy of the video evidence from the BBC, the Secretariat again requested clarification of the issue, particularly the video footage, from the Yugoslav authorities. The Secretariat also requested that the Yugoslav authorities permit an independent team of international experts, led by the United Nations, to visit the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to assist in a further investigation aimed at resolving the matter.

On 9 October 1998, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations informed the Secretariat that, following the warning by the Netherlands that there were indications that two Dutch UNPROFOR APCs had been spotted in Kosovo and Metohija, the competent Yugoslav authorities had carried out an investigation and established that the said vehicles were not in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The findings of the investigation had been conveyed to the United Nations and the Dutch authorities in the 26 June 1998 letter from the Secretary of the Yugoslav Federal Committee for Cooperation with United Nations Peace Missions and the Multinational Force. Accordingly, the Yugoslav side considered the matter closed and all future inquiries in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia unwarranted.